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THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Deputy Under Secretary

February 21, 1952

R - Mr. Armstrong

SUBJECT: NIE on India and Pakistan

I should be sorry to cause CIA to waste any effort in its NIE work or to produce a paper that was too hedged with contingencies to have any meaning, but I believe the proposed study on India and Pakistan is a worthy project and should be pursued.

The problem should be modified so that it would not be limited to the consequences of an Indo-Pakistan war, but would consider the loss of the subcontinent no matter what events might deliver it to the Communists. The question could also be improved so that psychological consequences will be specifically studied. It might be reworded thus:

"What would be the [economic, military,] political and psychological impact on the East-West balance of power of the loss of the India sub-continent to international communism, either as a result of the chaos that might accompany an Indo-Pakistan war, or an internal economic breakdown, or as a result of communist rise to power through other internal or external developments?"

The problem should be studied, I think, on the assumption that the subcontinent could fall to the Communists even before Southeast Asia or the Middle East. This is a possibility which NEA considers realistic.

I do not believe NIE 56 and NIE 59 will make this study unnecessary though they should make important material readily available for it.

Although I understand that the subject might lead easily to some obvious general answers, I also find that those who assume they know the answers often give forth merely broad, vague and even conflicting opinions. This suggests to me a lack of precise appreciation of the significance of the region to us. Therefore, I should like to repeat my request that the NIE be prepared.

H. Freeman Matthews

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY

2/22/52

PERSONAL

FOR: Mr. Sherman Kent

FROM: W. Park Armstrong, Jr.

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February 8, 1952

MEMORANDUM

To: G - Mr. Matthews

Subject: NIE on India-Pakistan

About two months ago you requested us to initiate a National Intelligence Estimate addressed to the question: "What would be the economic, military, and political impact on the East-West balance of power of the loss of the Indian sub-continent to international Communism as a consequence of the chaos produced by an Indo-Pakistan war?" This arose out of your desire to get clarification of an NSC paper which predicted that an Indian-Pakistani war would open the way to "possible Communist control of the sub-continent" and "threaten a crisis of greater proportions in relation to US national security than the current crises in Egypt and Iran."

Such an estimate was authorized as NIE-61. It was specifically not to consider the probability either of an Indian-Pakistani war or the loss of India and Pakistan to the Communists. The estimate, therefore, has been restricted essentially to an assessment of the strategic importance of the sub-continent.

CIA has twice come back to us with difficulties over this. They now specifically ask us to withdraw our request, mainly because such an estimate -- particularly if couched in terms of "consequences of the loss" -- will present great difficulties in the doing and when completed will be of dubious value. The following reasoning is put forward.

a. NIE-23: "India's Position in the East-West Conflict" (4 September 1951) deals with India's strategic importance in the East-West conflict. There is no reason to believe that the basic conclusions reached therein need be revised, even though the estimate be broadened to include Pakistan.

b. NIE-56: "Likelihood of Loss of Important Economic resources in Selected Foreign Areas" and NIE-59: "Relative Strategic Importance of East-West Trade to the Soviet Orbit and to the Rest of the World" (both of which are in process) should together provide ample coverage of the importance of India's economic resources to the Western world, as well as the likelihood of their being lost to the West.

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c. Past experience has demonstrated the difficulty of dealing meaningfully with the military aspects of a paper such as NIE-61. The IAC agencies are unable to go beyond a discussion of fairly obvious geographic factors and local military capabilities without entering the "war gaming" business and without access to operational plans which have hitherto been withheld.

d. A further difficulty with the paper as now contemplated is its hypothetical nature, which makes it difficult to arrive at useful military and economic conclusions and makes it virtually impossible to arrive at valid or useful political conclusions. There is almost universal agreement that mainland Southeast Asia and possibly the Middle East are likely to come under Communist control before the Indian sub-continent. The IAC is thus faced with the task of estimating the impact of an event on the East-West balance of power position, when that impact would be heavily influenced by other more likely changes in the power balance.

e. In short, the paper would go to some lengths to tell you that the sub-continent is of great strategic importance and that its loss would be a serious blow to US security. For the remainder, it would deal with possibilities so hedged with assumptions and contingencies as to be of scarcely any assistance in the formulation of policy.

In light of the above, and also because of a heavy load on NIE resources, I would like your concurrence in cancelling the request for the estimate.

(sgd) W. PARK ARMSTRONG, JR.

W. Park Armstrong, Jr.

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cc: OIR MR. EVANS

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